ARTICLES

Murderers of Christ. Do Not Repeat the Same Mistake

A WORLD WITHOUT ANTICULTISM. PART 1.

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Without anticultism, billions of people would have been spared from suffering, persecution, and pain, and millions would have remained alive. Yet, over more than

three decades of its devastating impact, we have observed the opposite. It was anticultism that fueled the brutal rise of Nazism as we know it in history. Moreover, were it not for anticultism, even Jesus Christ would not have faced execution. Anticultism was what drove Christ out of the Christian Orthodox Church. It was anticultism that caused the deaths of millions of people in numerous wars. It triggered defamation campaigns, and led to violence, torture, and deaths. It has incited persecution against numerous groups. Were it not for anticultism, adults would not have been killed, families would not have been destroyed, and children wouldn't have endured unimaginable suffering and trials. You doubt it? In this article, we'll examine the devastating influence of anticultism on society through historical examples. We'll begin with one of humanity's pivotal tragedies linked directly to anticult actions — the persecution and murder of Jesus Christ.

The Most Unfair Trial. The Execution of Christ

Preparation for the Trial

From a historical perspective, we know that Jesus spoke with people who were inspired by his wisdom and followed him. The religious elite did not like this and sought a way to destroy Christ. They also spread evil rumors about him, stirring up

hatred among the people toward him and his followers. Just as today, so in those days the representatives of anticultism used apostates to achieve their goals. Through the treachery of the apostate Judas, Jesus was arrested and subjected to two trials — one religious and one Roman. Due to a series of unlawful actions instigated by anticultists, Jesus was sentenced to death. In this article, we'll delve into specific aspects of this episode in Jesus's life and answer a range of questions.

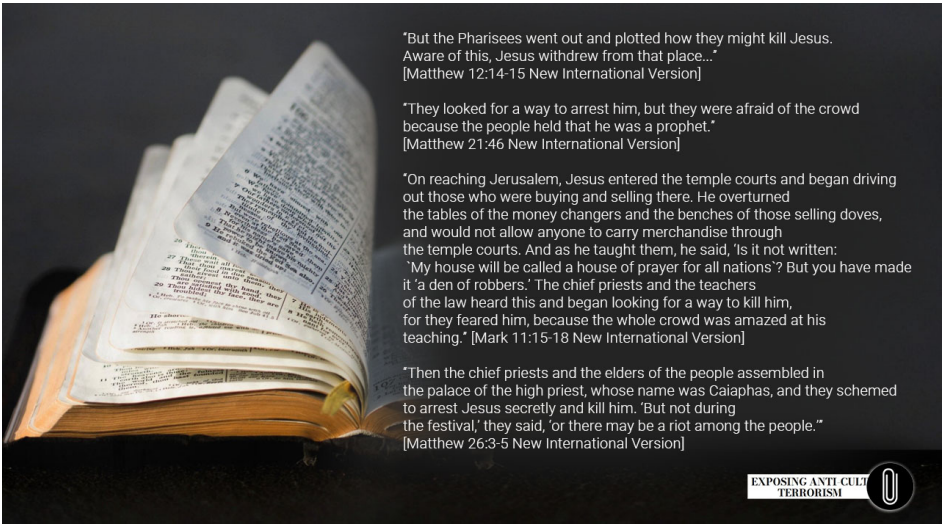
Was Jesus Christ a "Threat"? And Other Anticult Accusations.

Jesus told the truth and spoke openly to people, bringing love and freedom, which was new to the religious traditions of the Jewish people, who until then had relied on militancy, power, and fear. The foundations that the high priests had nurtured for centuries were crumbling in the minds of those who came in contact with Jesus. The religious elite perceived Him and His words as a threat. Leaders of the dominant religious groups feared the impact of Christ's teachings and repeatedly conspired to have Him killed without having to face public outrage. People, however, loved Christ, and many were ready to defend him [1].

"But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus. Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place..." [Matthew 12:14-15 New International Version]

"They looked for a way to arrest him, but ***they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet."*** *[Matthew 21:46 New International Version]*

"On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, 'Is it not written: `My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations`? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.' ***The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching."*** *[Mark 11:15-18 New International Version]*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EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

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The chief priests were ready to use cunning tactics and even violate their own laws (despite this being considered a grave sin and condemned by them) with just one goal – to ensure Jesus's death sentence. To achieve this, they employed reliable, time-tested methods of manipulating the masses, methods that would guarantee bringing even an entirely innocent person to execution. Such methods included what is known today as dehumanization, defamation, stigmatization, and similar tactics.

These methods were systematically used — and continue to be used — by representatives of anticultism, the force behind persecution and execution of Christ. And to this day, it is still behind those who continue to persecute innocent people. Is it a coincidence that these methods are still used by anticult organizations? No. The current stigmatizers of dissenters, the anticultists, as faithful successors of their historical predecessors, employ anticult methods, carrying out a genocide against millions. These are the same methods that were used to oppress Jesus Christ and the early Christians.

These are the same methods employed by the Nazis in Hitler's Germany.

This anticult scenario unfolds in several stages. Let's examine these in detail through the example of the persecution and fabricated trial of Jesus Christ.

Step One: Manipulating Public Opinion and Spreading False Rumors

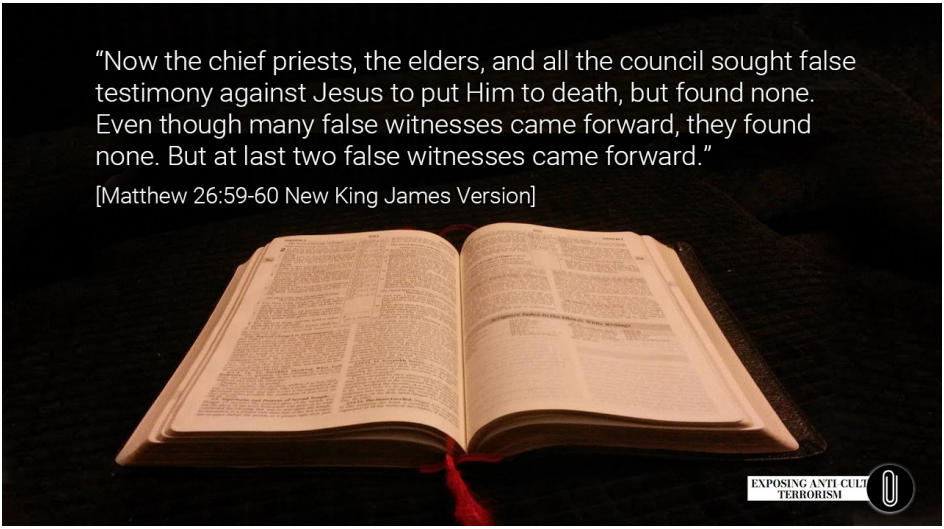
Oppression and Persecution of Christ

Analysis of surviving historical records reveals that the rhetoric used against Jesus Christ was strikingly similar to that of modern-day anticultists. In order to ensure a solid vindication for the future execution of an innocent person in the eyes of the public, they first organized a campaign against Jesus by resorting to methods of dehumanization. Following anticultists' efforts, the public was fed lies about Jesus and his followers. The religious elite, represented by the scribes and Pharisees, spread rumors and distorted the meaning of Christ's words and actions.

For example, Matthew's Gospel says that chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin were seeking to find false testimony against

Jesus in order to sentence him to death.

"Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council ***sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none****. Even though* ***many false witnesses came forward****, they found none. But at last* ***two false witnesses came forward****."* *[Matthew 26:59-60 New King James Version]*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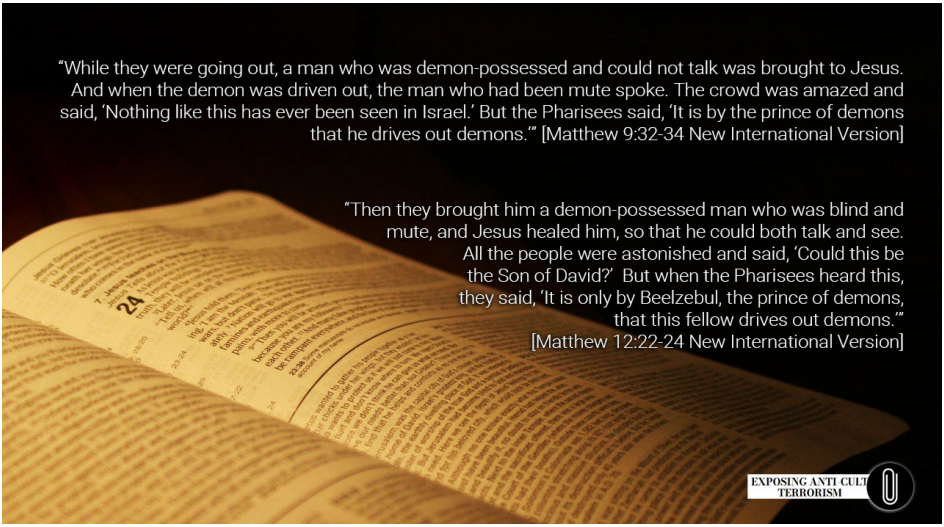
EXPOSING ANTI-CULT TERRORISM

This highlights their willingness to break their own laws to achieve their goal of eliminating Jesus and His teaching. What kind of falsehoods were spread about Jesus? The New Testament preserves records of the slander. In an attempt to tarnish and discredit Jesus' deeds filled with mercy, compassion, concern for people and their healing, the slanderers, who were incapable of doing anything like that,

said that Jesus did this using the power of Beelzebub, that is, using demonic rather than divine power:

"While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. ***The crowd was amazed and said, 'Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.'*** *But the Pharisees said,* ***'It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.'"*** *[Matthew 9:32-34 New International Version]*

"Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. ***All the people were astonished and said, 'Could this be the Son of David?' But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, 'It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.'"*** *[Matthew 12:22-24 New International Version]*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EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Another consequence of anticult dehumanization is the manipulation of close family members and relatives of those targeted by anti-cultists. A prime example of destroying family harmony destroyed through anticult dehumanization we can observe in the life of Christ.

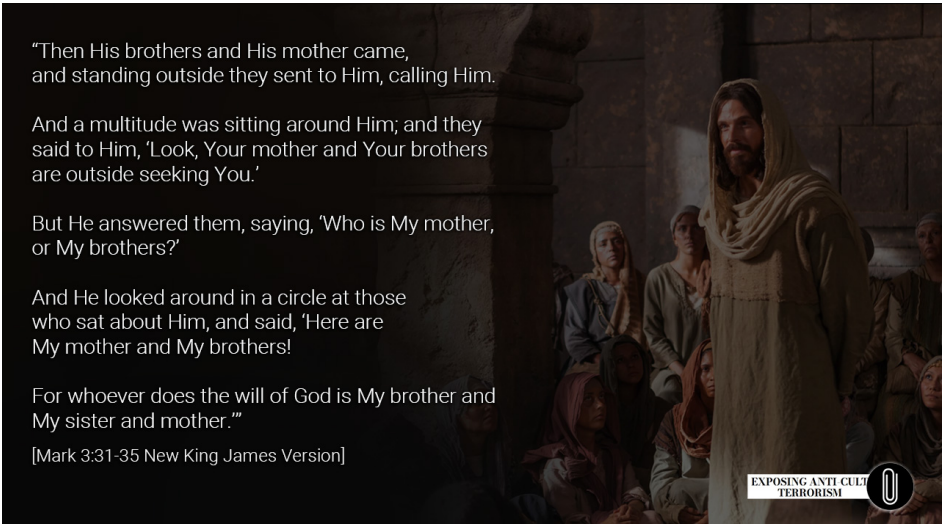
"Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When ***his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, 'He is out of his mind.'"*** *[Mark 3:20-21 New International Version]*

"For even his own brothers did not believe in him." *[John 7:5 New International Version]*

Under the influence of anticult rhetoric, those close to Jesus Christ believed that He was risking His life in madness. There's an account where Jesus was sitting with his friends, having a conversation, and His mother and brothers came to take Him away, thinking he had lost his mind. Succumbing to Pharisees' anticult propaganda, His mother felt ashamed before others, believing her son had gone mad and was creating a "cult." In modern terms, this was the result of programming and manipulation of Jesus's relatives by the Pharisees, scribes, and various anti-cultists of that time. Through demonization and stigmatization, they sought to achieve victory over Jesus through the hands of His own family.

"Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, 'Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.'

But He answered them, saying, 'Who is My mother, or My brothers?' And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.'" [Mark 3:31-35 New King James Version]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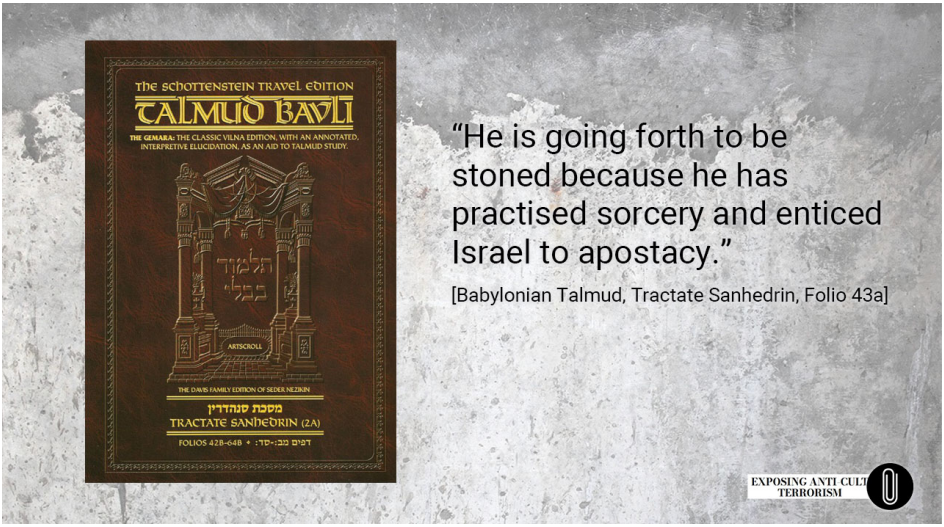
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

From rabbinic texts, we learn that forty days before the crucifixion, a herald went out [2] announcing:

"He is going forth to be stoned because he has ***practised sorcery and enticed Israel to apostacy****." [Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin, Folio 43a]*


THE SCHOTTENSTEIN TRAVEL EDITION
TALMUD BAVLI
THE GEMARA: THE CLASSIC VILNA EDITION, WITH AN ANNOTATED, INTERPRETIVE ELUCIDATION, AS AN AID TO TALMUD STUDY
ARTSCROLL
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EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

The Judean people's perception of objective reality was distorted by anticult propaganda. To better understand this example, let's consider modern times when, much like in those days, countless families, groups, and individuals endure similar tragedies, manifesting as unjust oppression. Innocent family members, stigmatized by the anticult methods, suffer the full horror of public disdain and unleashed hatred.

However, the oppression did not end with the persecution of Jesus Christ. A couple of centuries after His life, slanderers continued to defame His memory, attaching more derogatory labels to the Son of God: "sorcerer," "sorcerer, who was hated by God," "illegitimate child," "seducer" (meaning a deceiver), "imposter," "lunatic," "rebel," and other pejoratives. Celsus, a pagan writer from the second century, described Christian

teachings as “dishonorable” and life-corrupting in his work “On the true doctrine” [3].

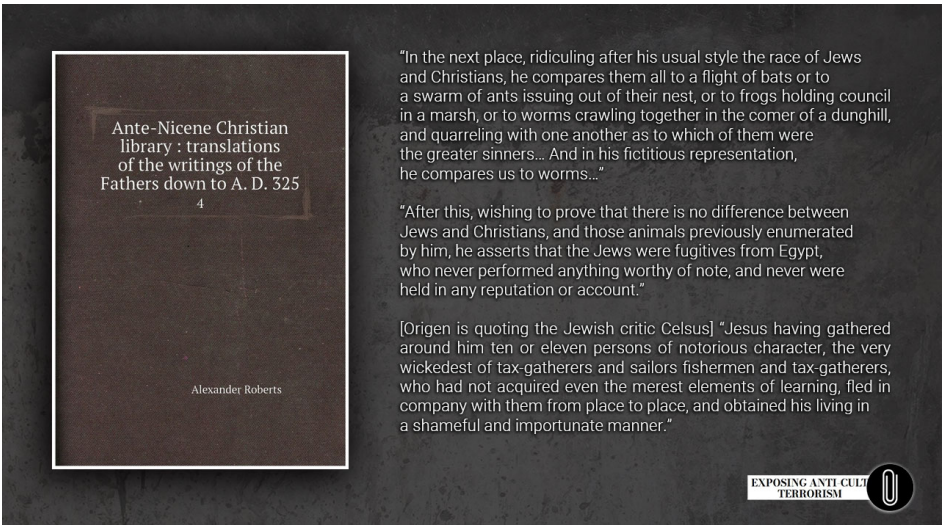
Celsus depicted Christians through an anticult lens. His work has survived partially thanks to Origen, who quoted Celsus’s words. Celsus claimed that Christians formed an unlawful organization and that their teachings were “barbaric.” According to him, Christianity attracted followers only “the foolish,” as though it sought followers only among the lower classes. The pagan Celsus claimed that no educated person from the higher classes would believe in this teaching. The following quote describes how Celsus dehumanized Jewish Christians, branding them as animals [4].

‘In the next place, ridiculing after his usual style the race of Jews and Christians, he compares them all to **a flight of bats or to a swarm of ants issuing out of their nest, or to frogs holding council in a marsh, or to worms** *crawling together in the comer of a dunghill, and quarreling with one another as to which of them were the greater sinners… And in his fictitious representation, he* **compares us to worms**…’

‘After this, wishing to prove that there is no difference between Jews and Christians, and those **animals** *previously enumerated by him, he asserts that the Jews were fugitives*

from Egypt, ***who never performed anything worthy of note****, and never were held in any reputation or account.'*

'[Origen is quoting the Jewish critic Celsus] 'Jesus having gathered around him ten or eleven persons of notorious character, the very wickedest of tax-gatherers and sailors fishermen and tax-gatherers, who had not acquired even the merest elements of learning, fled in company with them from place to place, and obtained his living in a shameful and importunate manner.'"


Ante-Nicene Christian library : translations of the writings of the Fathers down to A. D. 325
4
Alexander Roberts
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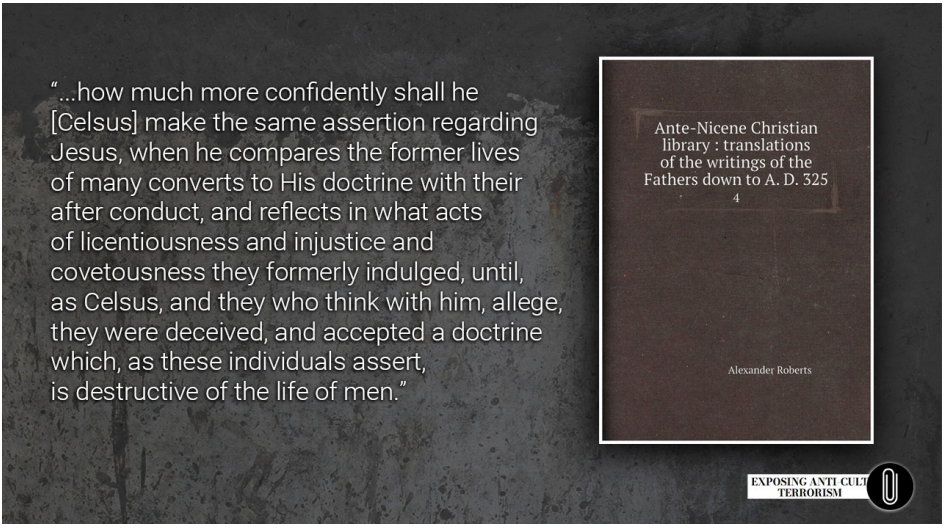
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Origen, in his treatise *Contra Celsum*, refutes his words [5] *"... how much more confidently shall he [Celsus]* ***make the same assertion regarding Jesus, when he compares the former lives of many converts to His doctrine with their after conduct, and reflects*** *in what acts of licentiousness and injustice and*

covetousness they formerly indulged, until, ***as Celsus, and they who think with him, allege****, they* ***were deceived, and accepted a doctrine*** *which, as these individuals assert, is* ***destructive of the life of men.****"*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Ante-Nicene Christian library : translations of the writings of the Fathers down to A. D. 325
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EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

In Jesus' biography, there is a fact about His stay in Egypt. He did spend some time there as an infant, hidden from Herod's brutal campaign to exterminate children under the age of two. For the Judean people, Egypt was already stigmatized and associated with witchcraft. The Talmud says [6] that Egypt holds nine out of ten measures of sorcery in the world:

"Ten kav of witchcraft descended to the world; Egypt took nine and the rest of the world took one." (Kiddushin 49b)

“And there is no witchcraft like the witchcraft of Egypt.” (Avot de-Rabbi Natan 1:28) [7]

— this also became the basis for accusations against Jesus. The fact that Jesus was in Egypt was distorted by his haters.

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For example, Celsus claimed that “*Jesus, an illegitimate child, who having hired himself out as a servant in Egypt on account of his poverty, and having there acquired some miraculous powers,... returned to his own country...and by means of these proclaimed himself a God.*” [8] [Origen *Contra Celsum* 1:38]. The confirmation of this fact is also found in many authoritative Bible scholars and theologians, for example, in W. Barklay’s works.

Rabbin Eliezer ben Hurcanus even claimed that Jesus had marks on his body with magical spells [9]:

In the Talmud Shabbath folio 104 we read: "He who cuts upon his flesh." It is a tradition that Rabbi Eliezer said to the wise, Has not Ben Stada [one of the names of Jesus Christ in the Talmud] brought magic spells from Egypt in a cut which was upon his body?

The Talmud describes Jesus of Nazareth as a frivolous disciple who practiced magic and turned to idolatry [Sanhedrin 107b and Sotah 47a]. This association with sorcery was attributed to Jesus because Judean society strictly condemned the use of magical practices. With this accusation, they did their best to create a lasting aversion among people towards Christ. It is worth noting that these accusations themselves do not stand up to criticism, since Jesus was brought to Egypt as an infant and returned to home country as a little child, not as a magician or sorcerer. As we can see, anticult propaganda does not care about facts and truth, the main thing is to stigmatize, no matter how absurd and unrealistic the fabricated lies may be.

This tactic illustrates the use of an anticult method, namely attributing guilt by association, when a person is deliberately and purposefully associated with something, the reputation of

which is already extremely tarnished in society, and, as a rule, to which the person often did not have any relation, even indirectly. Moreover, the stigma itself is often artificially created in advance, so that later there would be something to stigmatize with. According to anticultist logic, Egypt is something extremely negative and demonic, and since Jesus was in Egypt, this association could further demonize him. This kind of flawed reasoning has recurred repeatedly throughout history in anticultist campaigns of harassment and stigmatization against undesirable groups. This is how the deluge of anticult lies, like a deadly infection, spreads in society and kills people.

In the time of Jesus, the stigmas of "blasphemer," "false prophet," and "insane" were as repulsive and denigrating to a person as the stigma of a "cultist" is today. Back then, the stigmatization campaign began in the religious sphere, just as it does now. Just as in those days, when a person's reputation destroyed by rumors became grounds for bringing a case in court, only with changing the stigma to a more legally appropriate one, so today the inconvenient label of "cultist" is replaced with more secular, legal alternatives, such as "extremist," "terrorist," "migrant," "foreign agent," or simply someone "engaged in illegal missionary activity," and so on. In Jesus' time, the secular stigmas were "rebel" and "one who committed a crime of lese majesty against the dignity of the

Roman people (a direct insult to the emperor)". The stigma has not changed much today, it is still the same: "traitor to the Motherland", "rebel", "spy" and so on.

Life in the Crosshairs

For anticultists who seek to eliminate an undesirable group, the first step is to stigmatize and dehumanize not just the group as a whole, but first and foremost its leader. If there is no obvious leader, anticultists label a person from that group to be its "leader"; someone who would be the most convenient target for subsequent bullying and destruction. Why single out a leader and publicly destroy their reputation and their life? The prevailing narrative among those at the forefront of modern anticultism is that if they eliminate the "leader" of a group they label a "cult" or "sect," the group itself will fall apart. (For instance: *"Every sect begins with a leader... The vast majority of totalitarian sects do not survive their leader"* [A. Dvorkin]).

This reasoning explains why Jesus's accusers didn't aim to imprison him— it would have saved his life. Instead, they wanted his death to bring an end to the movement of freedom, equality, love, and nonviolence that He founded, hoping to demoralize his followers and crush their spirit. However, history proved otherwise. Jesus and his followers were

stigmatized, and even after his execution, the early Christians who continued His good work were labeled, tortured, and killed. However, despite the efforts of this evil force to turn people away from Christ and to erase him from the memory of humanity, His teaching lives in the hearts of people to this day.

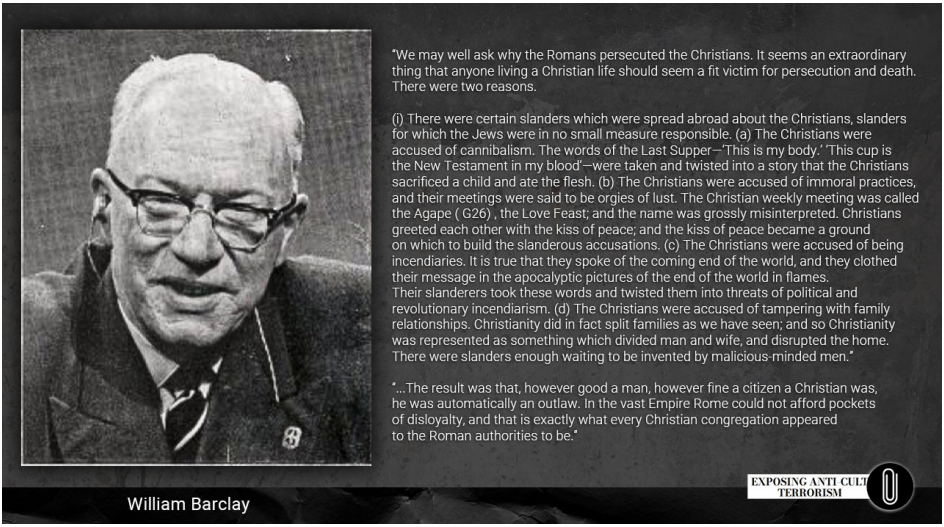
William Barclay, a professor of theology from Glasgow, Scotland, and a prominent figure in biblical studies and Christian education, describes stigmatization of Christians in the following words [10]:

"We may well ask why the Romans persecuted the Christians. It seems an extraordinary thing that anyone living a Christian life should seem a fit victim for persecution and death. «...»

(i) There were certain slanders which were spread abroad about the Christians, slanders for which the Jews were in no small measure responsible. (a) The **Christians were accused of cannibalism.** *The words of the Last Supper — 'This is my body.' 'This cup is the New Testament in my blood' — were taken and twisted into a story that* **the Christians sacrificed a child and ate the flesh.** *(b)* **The Christians were accused of immoral practices**, *and their meetings were said to be orgies of lust. The Christian weekly meeting was called the Agape (G26) , the Love Feast; and the name was grossly misinterpreted. Christians greeted each other with the kiss of peace; and the*

kiss of peace became a ground on which to build the slanderous accusations. (c) **The Christians were accused of being incendiaries.** *It is true that they spoke of the coming end of the world, and they clothed their message in the apocalyptic pictures of the end of the world in flames. Their slanderers took these words and twisted them into* **threats of political and revolutionary incendiarism**. *(d)* **The Christians were accused of tampering with family relationships.** *Christianity did in fact split families as we have seen; and so Christianity was represented as something which divided man and wife, and* **disrupted the home**. *There were slanders enough waiting to be invented by malicious-minded men."*

"...The result was that, however good a man, however fine a citizen a Christian was, he was automatically an outlaw. In the vast Empire Rome could not afford pockets of disloyalty, and that is exactly what every Christian congregation appeared to the Roman authorities to be."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EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM
William Barclay

It's worth noting here that authorities viewed their own citizens in this light partly due to defamatory anticult propaganda directed against this group of Christ's followers.

The goal at this stage is to attach a stigma. The stigma or shame mark is typically chosen by anticultists based on a sensitive topic relevant at that particular time for the specific audience whom the brainwashing propaganda targets. The properly selected topic by anticultists triggers a strong emotional response from society. The chosen topic may spark intense responses from people in one region, while evoking no emotion or interest from people in another. Therefore, anticult representatives find a specific "key" for each audience by selecting a relevant emotionally charged topic, or by inventing one, to stir up social tension and deepen polarization in society.

The same anticult rhetoric was used against Jesus Christ as is used now by modern-day anticultists against targeted groups. History has documented multiple examples of Christ being branded with classic anticult slander, such as claims that Christians supposedly ate children, destroyed families, or drowned into immorality, posed a threat to the state. Anticult rhetoric remains unchanged to this day.

"The **man** who is the slave of anger, the man who speaks in the accent of contempt, the man **who destroys another's good name, may never have committed a murder in action, but he is a murderer at heart**," wrote William Barclay about the stigmatizers in his *Bible Commentaries. The Gospel of Matthew*.

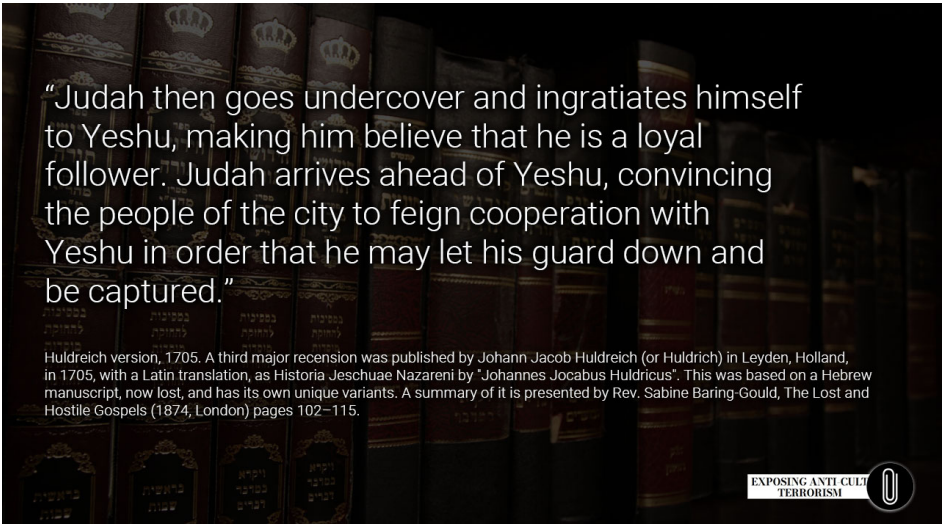
Judas, the Traitor and Apostate

The arrest of Jesus Christ was made possible with the help of the traitor Judas Iscariot.

In support of the well-known version extant in the New Testament, there is also a summary of the Hebrew manuscript known as the Huldreich version*[11]:

*"**Judah then goes undercover and ingratiates himself to Yeshu**, making him believe that he is a loyal follower. **Judah arrives***

ahead of Yeshu, convincing the people of the city to feign cooperation with Yeshu in order that he may let his guard down and be captured."


"Judah then goes undercover and ingratiates himself to Yeshu, making him believe that he is a loyal follower. Judah arrives ahead of Yeshu, convincing the people of the city to feign cooperation with Yeshu in order that he may let his guard down and be captured."
Huldreich version, 1705. A third major recension was published by Johann Jacob Huldreich (or Huldrich) in Leyden, Holland, in 1705, with a Latin translation, as Historia Jeschuae Nazareni by "Johannes Jocabus Huldricus". This was based on a Hebrew manuscript, now lost, and has its own unique variants. A summary of it is presented by Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould, The Lost and Hostile Gospels (1874, London) pages 102–115.
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Jesus and His disciples would retreat for a prayer to a secluded place. Later, this secluded place, where there were no people to defend Christ, worked to the advantage of those who repeatedly sought to harm Him. Judas, being one of His disciples, knew this place very well. As we know from the Scripture, after making prior arrangements with those who stigmatized and falsely accused Christ, Judas betrayed Jesus and brought many guards to that place to seize Christ:

"...Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from ***the chief priests and the elders of the people****.." [Matthew 26:47 New*

International Version]. By using and manipulating the apostate Judas, those who had been dehumanizing and demonizing Jesus Christ in the eyes of society for a long time were finally able to carry out the violent phase against Him, the one which they had attempted to implement earlier.

As we see in history and in contemporary practice, the principle of anticult activity remains the same. It demonstrates that oftentimes, a discontented apostate becomes a key tool in a dehumanization campaign against undesirable groups branded as "sects," "cults," and so on; someone who seeks revenge on former associates. Anticultists use such individuals as battering rams against the targeted group, whom the apostate attacks with emotion-driven rhetoric and hatred. This type of individuals are easy to exploit, as their mind is clouded by intense emotions, resentment, and a desire for revenge, which makes them highly suggestible and susceptible to manipulation.

Very soon Judas realized the gravity of the crime he had committed against Jesus. By the morning, he wanted to undo everything, but the chief priests and elders ignored his confession and objection, for they had already reached their goal: *"When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned,* ***he was seized with remorse*** *and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders.* ***'I have***

sinned,' he said, 'for I have betrayed innocent blood.' 'What is that to us?' they replied. 'That's your responsibility.'" [Matthew 27:3–4 New International Version]. Judas and his remorse meant nothing to them, and they were indifferent to the innocent lives damaged and ruined by their actions.

Absurdity of Lies

Imagine the absurdity of the situation. People love Jesus Christ; they converse with Him, they feel comforted by the genuine truth He speaks. People are grateful to Him, they believe Him, and they follow Him. That's the real public opinion. But all of a sudden, there comes a small group of well-organized people who have thought they could pass judgment on the lives of millions. They declare that they will "protect" the crowd from Jesus, as though they somehow know who is a "threat" and who is not. Yet instead of protecting, they use their proven methods of manipulation, deception, and dehumanization. This raises the question: under the guise of supposedly "protecting" society, what were they actually protecting this society from? From the comfort, verity and truth coming from Jesus Christ? Or were they, in reality, defending their religious hegemony in that region, that is to say, their power?

Let's look at the historical evidence of how people actually felt about Christ. In the New Testament we find the following:

"He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him." [Luke 4:15 New International Version]

"...The large crowd listened to him with delight." [Mark 13:37 New International Version]

The story of a man's sincere regard for Christ has come down to us. Church history preserves the account of a letter written by Eusebius to Jesus [12] [*Ecclesiastical History* by Eusebius, Book I Chapter 13 and Book III Chapter 1]. This story states that in the city of Edessa, there was a king named Abgar who, being ill, wrote to Christ:

"Abgarus, ruler of Edessa, to Jesus the excellent Saviour who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem, greeting. I have heard the reports of you and of your cures as performed by you without medicines or herbs. For it is said that you make the blind to see and the lame to walk, that you cleanse lepers and cast out impure spirits and demons, and that you heal those afflicted with lingering disease, and raise the dead.

And ***having heard all these things concerning you, I have concluded that one of two things must be true: either you are***

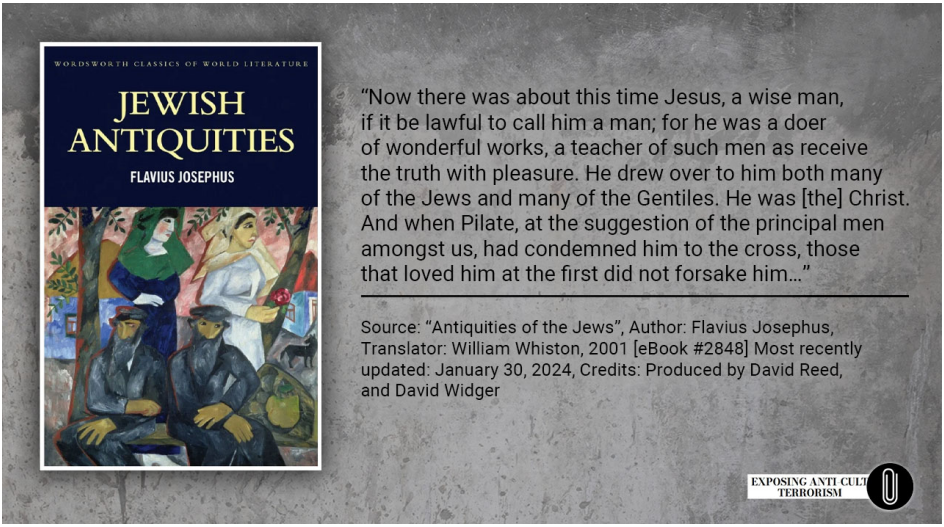
God, and having come down from heaven you do these things, or else you, who does these things, are the Son of God.

I have therefore written to you to ask you if you would take the trouble to come to me and heal the disease which I have. ***For I have heard that the Jews are murmuring against you and are plotting to injure you. But I have a very small yet noble city which is great enough for us both.****"*

In this letter, we see the loving regard that King Abgar had for Christ, offering him protection against the schemes of slanderers. It is evident that Abgarus did not believe the rumors and did not turn away from Jesus.

The historian Flavius Josephus describes Jesus' contemporaries' regard for Him as follows [13]:

"Now there was about this time ***Jesus, a wise man****, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works,* ***a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure****. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross,* ***those that loved him at the first did not forsake him****…"*


WORDSWORTH CLASSICS OF WORLD LITERATURE
JEWISH ANTIQUITIES
FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS
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Source: "Antiquities of the Jews", Author: Flavius Josephus, Translator: William Whiston, 2001 [eBook #2848] Most recently updated: January 30, 2024, Credits: Produced by David Reed, and David Widger
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Anticultism was already powerful at that time, and the methods used against Jesus Christ had been well-established long before those events took place. The religious elite was vigilant in maintaining the dominance and exclusivity of their religion, using anticult methods among other things. Jesus was subjected to a standard method of undermining trust in him — a tactic that today has only become more refined. Throughout world history, before and after Christ, up to the present day, the same scenario has been repeated over and over again: the stigmatization of people in order to eventually destroy them. Here are a few examples.

Example of Dehumanization in the Pre-Christian Period: Prophet Jeremiah

The same method of stigmatization was applied to the prophet Jeremiah, who lived approximately 600–700 years before the dehumanizing campaign against Jesus to murder him. Jeremiah spoke the truth, prophesied, and conveyed God's message to the Judean people regarding the consequences of unrighteous life, warning of Jerusalem's fall and how they could avoid that [14].

*"'...**follow an evil course and use their power unjustly. Both prophet and priest are godless;** even in my temple I find their wickedness,' declares the Lord." [Jeremiah 23:10-11 New International Version]*

*"'Among the prophets of Samaria I saw this repulsive thing: They prophesied **by Baal** and led my people Israel astray.'" [Jeremiah 23:13 New International Version]*

"...'follow an evil course and use their power unjustly. Both prophet and priest are godless; even in my temple I find their wickedness,' declares the Lord."
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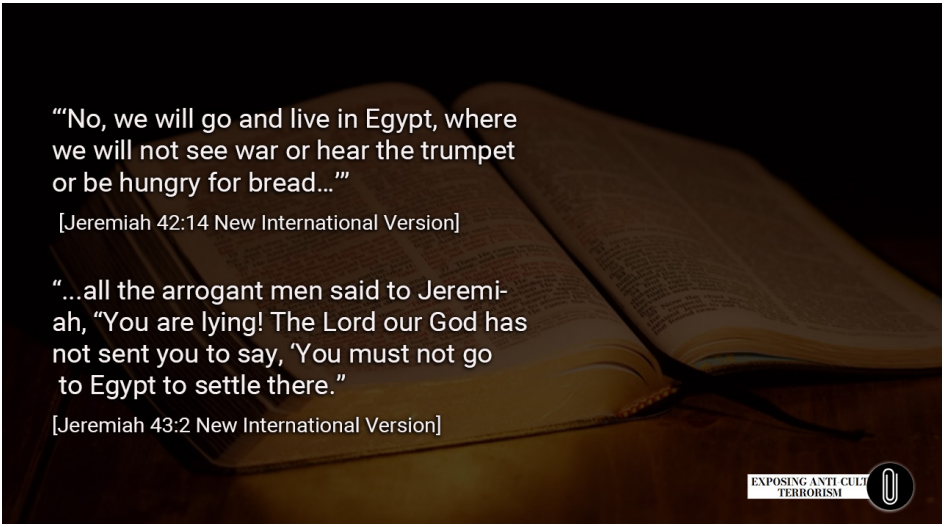
"'Among the prophets of Samaria I saw this repulsive thing: They prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray.'"
[Jeremiah 23:13 New International Version]
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Like Jesus, Jeremiah called people to repentance [Jeremiah 3:12-13, Mark 1:15] and a return to a just and merciful God. He taught that calamity could be avoided if people corrected their ways and turned to the true God, though not everyone wanted to hear this. The solutions he proposed were rejected by the majority. For speaking the truth, Jeremiah faced persecution and strong resistance from those who found his words inconvenient, as it touched on issues not only of moral life but also of politics. For instance, Jeremiah urged the people not to flee to Egypt to escape war and warned that they would perish there by the sword, calamity, and famine. Yet, they didn't heed his warnings.

"*'No, we will go and live in Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the trumpet or be hungry for bread...'" [Jeremiah 42:14 New International Version] "...all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, 'You are lying! The Lord our God has not sent you to say, `You must not go to Egypt to settle there.`'" [Jeremiah 43:2 New International Version]*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EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

The prophet offered change so the people could thrive rather than perish in inevitable conflicts and disasters. Since His words contradicted those of false prophets who promised an abundant future despite the people's sins *[Jeremiah 23:17 New International Version]*, Jeremiah was stigmatized "outcast" — meaning one who was rejected — and "raving," implying he should be confined in stocks and imprisoned. He was mockingly branded "king of the prophets" (a stigma with a double meaning, including pejorative mockery), slandered as a "deserter" *[Jeremiah 37:13-14 New International Version]*, and eventually detained.

"O Lord, You induced me, and I was persuaded;

You are stronger than I, and have prevailed.

I am in derision daily;

Everyone mocks me."

[Jeremiah 20:7 New King James Version]

"Then I said, 'I will not make mention of Him,

Nor speak anymore in His name.'

But His word was in my heart like a burning fire

Shut up in my bones;

I was weary of holding it back,

And I could not.

For ***I heard*** *many mocking:*

'Fear on every side!'

'Report,' they say, 'and ***we will report it****!"*

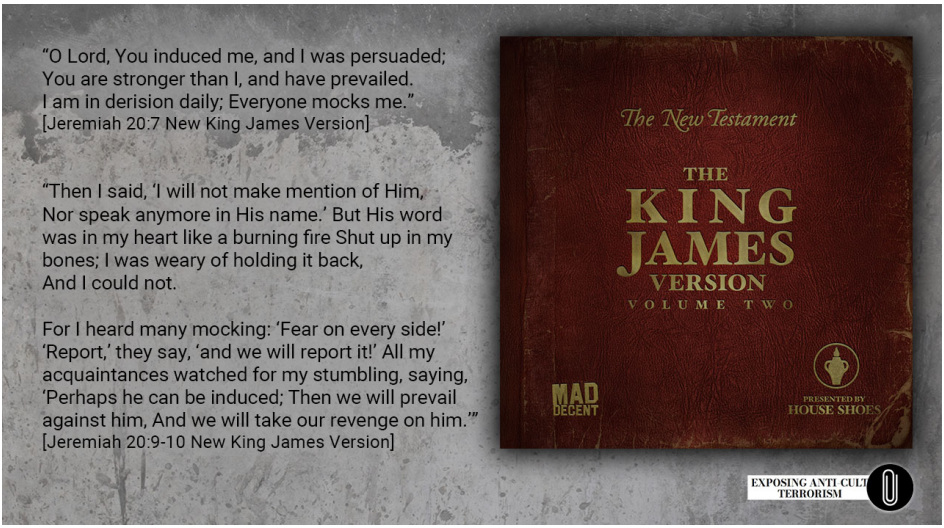
All my acquaintances watched for my stumbling, saying,

'Perhaps he can be induced;

Then we will prevail against him,

And we will take our revenge on him.'"

[Jeremiah 20:9-10 New King James Version]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The New Testament
THE
KING
JAMES
VERSION
VOLUME TWO
MAD DEGENT
PRESENTED BY
HOUSE SHOES
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Jeremiah had to face the opposing force for speaking the truth:

"So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord. Now it happened, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people,

that ***the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, 'You will surely die!*** *Why have you prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, `This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without an inhabitant`?'* ***And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah*** *in the house of the Lord.*

When the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the Lord and sat down in the entry of the New Gate of the Lord's house. ***And the priests and the prophets spoke to the princes and all the people, saying, 'This man deserves to die! For he has prophesied against this city****, as you have heard with your ears.'"*

[Jeremiah 26:7-11 New King James Version]

*"****So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, 'This man does not deserve to die.*** *For he has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God.'"*
[Jeremiah 26:7-11 New King James Version]

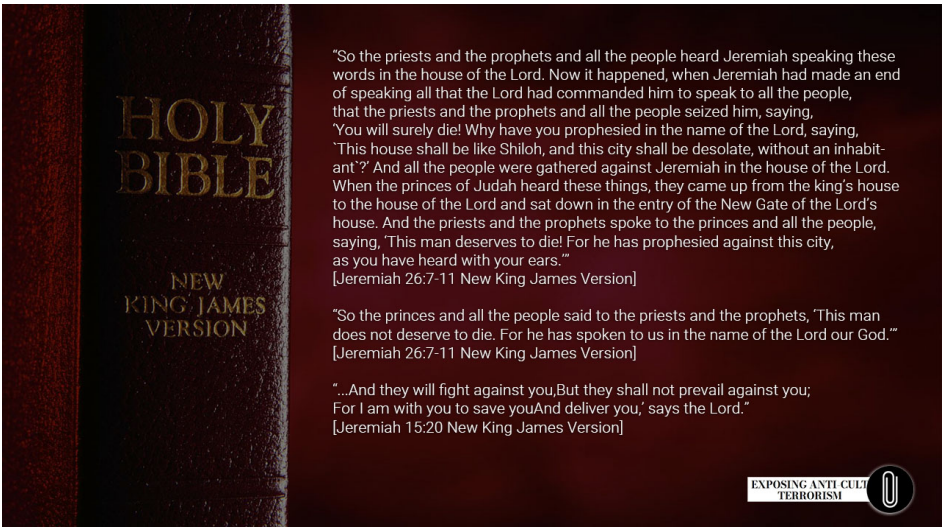
"...And they will fight against you,

But they shall not prevail against you;

For I am with you to save you

And deliver you,' says the Lord."

[Jeremiah 15:20 New King James Version]


HOLY BIBLE
NEW KING JAMES VERSION
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EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Jeremiah endured immense suffering. Just like Jesus Christ, he was seized by the priests who wanted to condemn him to death, by portraying his prophecies and warnings as a threat to stability and security. However, sensible elders and other people, including officials, intervened in time and legally protected the prophet from death, not letting him to be murdered [Jeremiah 26].

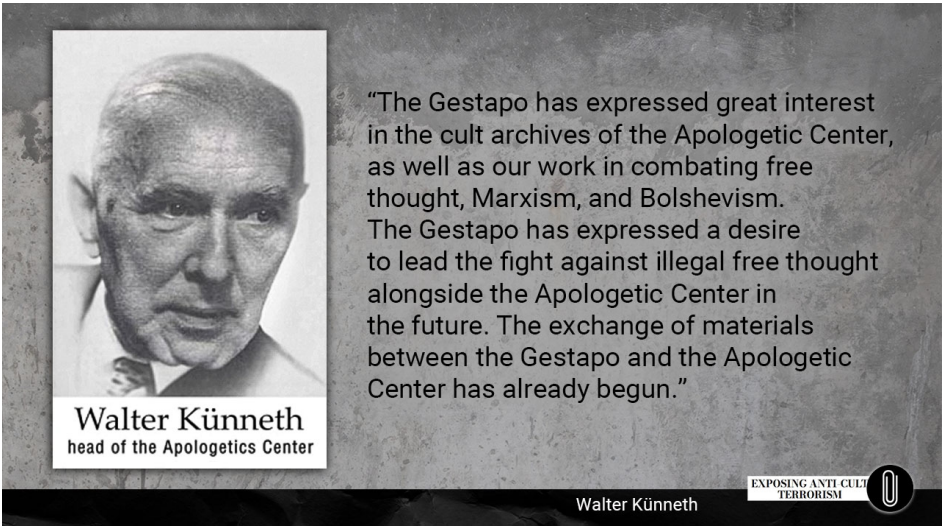
Modern Era. The Apogee of Anticult Influence. Example of Nazi Germany

Another striking example of how a true tragedy unfolds under anticult influence is Nazi Germany. At that time, an Apologetic Center to combat "sects" ("cults") was established within the Protestant Church. This center collected data on religious movements, sects, groups, and other associations, compiling a list of undesirable movements.

Under the leadership of anti-Semite Walter Künneth, who took charge of the center in 1933, it began to collaborate closely with the Gestapo. This collaboration included handing over lists of "dangerous" elements in society, as deemed by the center, to the state police, sharing methods of terrorizing targeted groups, and developing materials on combating Jews and "sects."

The upper echelon of German leadership, including Joseph Goebbels and Adolf Hitler, relied on this anticult movement within the Protestant Church. Its leader, Walter Künneth, presented a report to the Federal Church Administration in Berlin titled "The Church and the Jewish Question." This report had a significant impact on Germany's ultimate adoption of anti-Semitic agenda. Later, Walter Künneth wrote in a report to the leadership of the Protestant Church of the Reich the following:

"The Gestapo has expressed great interest in the cult archives of the Apologetic Center, as well as our work in combating free thought, Marxism, and Bolshevism. The Gestapo has expressed a desire to lead the fight against illegal free thought alongside the Apologetic Center in the future. The exchange of materials between the Gestapo and the Apologetic Center has already begun."


Walter Künneth
head of the Apologetics Center
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EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM
Walter Künneth

We know well how this tragedy unfolded in history. For more details on the connection between anticultism and Nazism, refer to the article "The New Face of Nazism: Anti-Cultism" and "The IMPACT" documentary.

After World War II, Künneth passed on the anticult methods and practices to his loyal disciple, Wilhelm Haack, who, in turn, entrusted them to his associate and "brother-in-faith",

Johannes Aagaard. Today, the Nazi anticult legacy, which had been passed down over a direct line from Nazi ideologues to Johannes Aagaard, has been inherited by his favorite student, Alexander Dvorkin. For decades, Dvorkin has led an anticult network in Russia and far beyond, while also serving as president of the Russian pro-religious association RACIRS.

Apologetic Centers and missionary departments of the Russian Orthodox Church represent a new wrapper for the same toxic content. They give the outward illusion of "protecting society," but are rooted in Nazi ideology that justifies the superiority of some citizens over others by anticult rhetoric similar to that used in Hitler's Germany. Who would have thought that Russia, the nation that suffered the most from Nazism during World War II, and sacrificed countless lives to contribute to its defeat, would today become a stronghold for its resurgence?

But let us return to the historical example of persecution and trial against Jesus Christ.

Anticult Method. Step Two: Unfair Trials and the True Criminals

At the beginning of the article, we examined the stages of dehumanizing those deemed undesirable, stigmatizing them,

and organizing their persecution. In this part, we'll consider the true goals of this stigmatization.

The imposed stigma served two main purposes. Firstly, the image of stigma sowed doubt in the minds of uninformed people who did not know the stigmatized individual, ensuring that at a crucial moment, the public would either support or at least not resist an impending, orchestrated execution of Christ.

Secondly, it created the illusion of "public" opinion, which could be used as a leverage point to pressure the authorities during the violent phase and subsequent trial.

Sort of, "It's not us who want to settle the matter with Christ (in fact, to murder Him); we're protecting people from a 'threat' — from Jesus." Hiding behind a screen of self-created rumors and gossip and calling it "public opinion," they pressured the authorities to pass a guilty verdict. In this way, they eliminated an innocent person through other people's hands, including certain members of the ruling authority, while the true instigators and culprits remained behind the scenes.

Who Truly Stood Behind the Death Sentence of Jesus Christ?

Why Is His Trial Called the Most Unjust Trial in History?

The activities of the Pharisees and scribes within the Sanhedrin are identical to those of modern anticult theologians. Those actively involved in anticult activities today tend to have theological or religious education rather than a scientific, unbiased background in religious studies.

The religious studies perspective, rooted in an objective scientific approach, provides a comprehensive understanding of religions as social and cultural phenomena with equal rights to exist. It relies on scientific justification and impartial analysis of various religious traditions, their histories, and influence on society, without elevating one tradition above others. Conversely, a theological or doctrinal viewpoint exalts a single religion as the only true one, promotes loyalty to it and asserts its superiority over others, often denigrating the customs, traditions, and values of other religions.

For the Judean religious elite (a kind of theologians of the past), adherence to the letter of the Law was considered more critical than preserving even human life. These were zealous adherents to the law's text — the Law of Moses, not secular law. However, even their dogmatic adherence to the Law did not prevent them from carrying out a plan to eliminate Jesus

Christ. Their hatred for Christ and His teachings led them to repeatedly violate the tenets of their own Sacred Scripture to achieve His execution. This will be explored in further detail as the article continues.

Jesus faced both religious and Roman courts. He was arrested at night by the servants of the religious elite, and that same night, under the influence of anticultism, He was tried by a religious court. Members of the Sanhedrin, the highest judicial and religious body in Judea, typically adhered scrupulously to established principles and rules. However, in this case, they violated their own strict laws multiple times before and during the trial.

Having seized Christ, they were so eager to prevent the people from rallying to His defense that they held the trial during the same night, under the cover of darkness — a practice strictly forbidden by their religion. According to the Talmud, courts were forbidden from conducting judicial proceedings at night, during the "*time of darkness and falsehood*." Additionally, there was a prohibition against holding trials on Fridays or the eve of holidays, which was also violated in this case.

Under Judean law, arrests were permitted only in cases of serious crimes, such as armed assault or murder, where there was a risk that the offender might flee. Therefore, the arrest of

Jesus can be classified as unlawful, as no crime had been committed. This is further evidenced by the fact that, despite the religious elite's hostility toward Him, Jesus had recently returned to Jerusalem shortly before His arrest. This demonstrates that He had no intention of hiding, as He was innocent of any wrongdoing.

Jesus Himself commented on the illegitimacy of His arrest:

"...Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? **I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me**." *[Matthew 26:55 New King James Version]*

According to the law, the accused had to be placed in custody and held in prison. This was required because Judean courts did not conduct trials of this nature at night [15]:

"In cases of capital law, the court judges during the daytime, and concludes the deliberations and issues the ruling only in the daytime." [Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5]

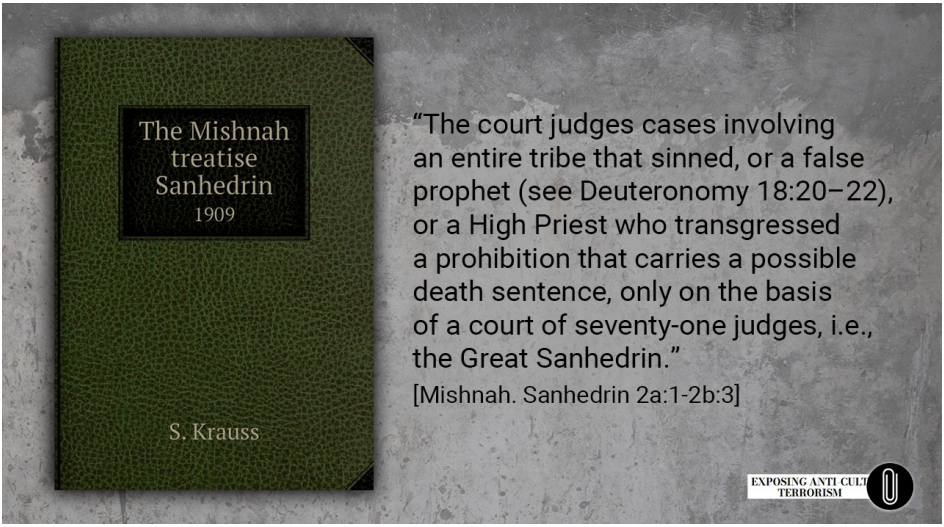
However, Jesus was first taken to the house of Annas, the former high priest, and then to Caiaphas, the acting high priest. It should be noted that if the Sanhedrin convened outside the Hall of Hewn Stones within the temple walls, such a verdict lost its force, that is, became null and void. In this

case, the trial of Christ took place in the courtyard of Caiaphas, the high priest, not in the temple.

"In cases of capital law, the court may conclude the deliberations and issue the ruling even on that same day to acquit the accused, but must wait until the following day to find him liable." [Mishnah Sanhedrin 4]

Whether intentionally or because of haste, not all members of the Great Sanhedrin were present at the trial, as was required by law [Mishnah Sanhedrin 1:5]. A judicial interrogation conducted without the full legal assembly of the court in a case involving capital punishment is null and void:

"***The court judges cases*** *involving an entire tribe that sinned, or a false prophet (see Deuteronomy 18:20–22), or a High Priest who transgressed a prohibition that carries* ***a possible death sentence, only on the basis of a court of seventy-one judges, i.e., the Great Sanhedrin.***" [Mishnah Sanhedrin 2a:1-2b:3]


The Mishnah
treatise
Sanhedrin
1909
S. Krauss
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[Mishnah. Sanhedrin 2a:1-2b:3]
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

An incomplete court assembly is a serious violation of the defendant's rights. This approach undermines the foundational principle of judicial transparency, which ensures trial's fairness and openness. Such a hearing becomes questionable, and any verdict reached in this manner is illegitimate.

During the trial, certain members of the Sanhedrin who could have voted against sentencing Christ were absent. Notably, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, "*a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed" [Luke 23:50-51 New King James Version]*, were not present, nor were other council members whose presence could have shifted the proceedings back to a lawful course. Nicodemus had earlier made his position clear at another session, asking, *"Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" [John 7:50-51 New King James Version].* These

procedural violations not only threatened the rights of the accused but also cast doubt on the credibility of the entire judicial system in Judea.

Another violation concerned the absence of the accuser. If the accuser fails to appear at trial, the court must release the accused and not proceed. The accuser was Judas, however, he did not appear in court. Furthermore, Christ was denied the lawful right to call defense witnesses, which highlighted the judges' bias and the injustice of the entire process. Denying the accused the opportunity to defend himself adequately and lawfully in court is another characteristic of a trial influenced by anticultism.

Judeans were prohibited from bribing witnesses to prevent false testimony, yet we see that the accusers still sought such witnesses. The New Testament denounces the actions of the Sanhedrin members, describing the witnesses they brought forward as false witnesses:

"The chief priests and ***the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any****, though* ***many false witnesses came forward****. Finally two came forward" [Matthew 26:59-60 New International Version].*

Due to the haste, the false witnesses for the prosecution were not properly prepared. Their testimonies pertained to various alleged crimes but lacked consistent details. Ultimately, these accounts were deemed irrelevant because even two witnesses could not agree in their testimonies. As a result, all "testimonies" turned out insufficient for conviction as isolated, incongruent, and contradictory statements. *[Mishnah Sanhedrin 5:3-4].*

Eventually, two false witnesses showed up who agreed in their testimony about Jesus' words: "He said, 'Destroy this temple, and ***in three days I will raise it up****.'" [John 2:19 New King James Version] By taking these words out of context, they accused him of intending to commit what we would call a terrorist act or an armed rebellion. However, many in Jerusalem, including those in the courtroom, knew that Christ was referring to the miracle of restoring the Temple, not to its destruction.*

Despite this, there was still insufficient evidence to sentence Jesus to death, and the trial reached an impasse. According to law, due to insufficient evidence of guilt, the criminal trial should have been halted, and the accused released. However, it is well known that Jesus had been sentenced to death long before the investigation, trial, or even his arrest began.

The New Testament reveals their conspiracy to kill Christ, showing that the trial served merely as a public facade of legality and righteousness, especially since it had anticult narrative embedded:

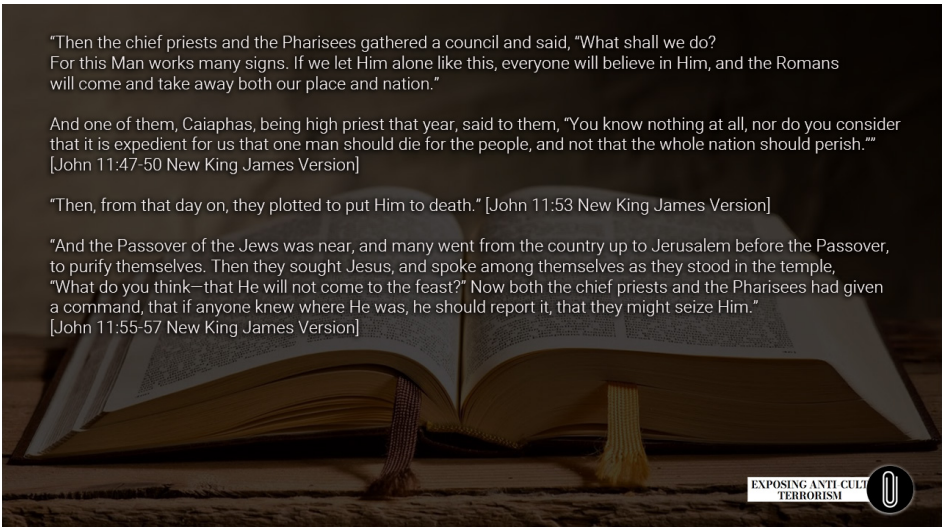
"Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, 'What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.'

And ***one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die*** *for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.'" [John 11:47-50 New King James Version]*

*"****Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death****." [John 11:53 New King James Version]*

"And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then they ***sought Jesus****, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, 'What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?'* ***Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew***

where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him."
[John 11:55-57 New King James Version]


"Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do?
For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."
And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.""
[John 11:47-50 New King James Version]
"Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death." [John 11:53 New King James Version]
"And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?" Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him."
[John 11:55-57 New King James Version]
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

As we see, the verdict was issued by one person — the high priest Caiaphas, head of the Sanhedrin — even before the nature of the alleged crime had been established. This was a yet another violation of Talmud [16]:

"...judge not alone, for none may judge alone save one."

[Mishnah Pirkei Avot 4:8]

Therefore, the accusers had no intention of letting Jesus go.

They apprehended Jesus Christ hoping to find evidence that would justify both the judicial proceedings and their own

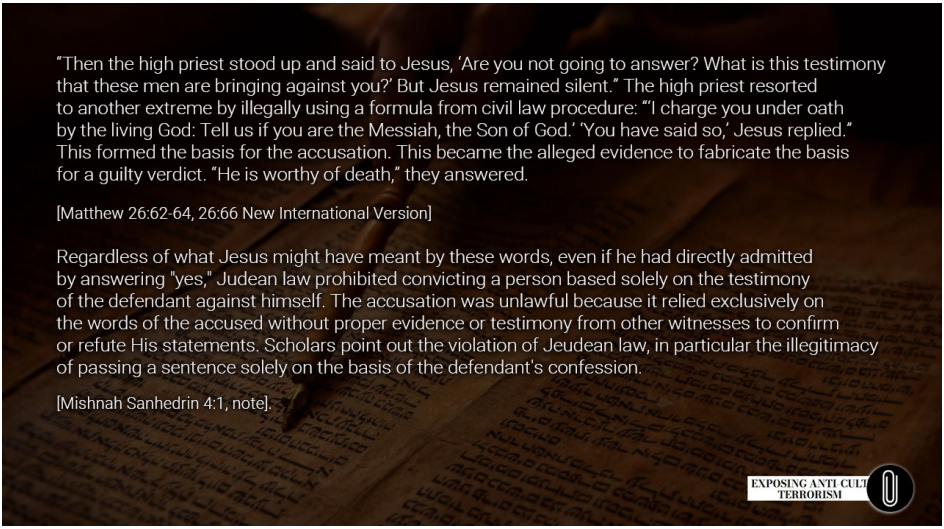
actions. During the trial, they needed at least any testimony to push an innocent person toward execution. Failing to find guilt during the trial, the high priest began questioning Jesus himself, which constituted another breach of procedural rules.

Jesus refrained from answering questions to prevent His words from being used against Him. In Judean criminal law, oaths were not employed; they were a feature of civil proceedings. **However, the high priest Caiaphas demanded that Jesus respond under oath.**

"Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, 'Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?' But Jesus remained silent." The high priest resorted to another extreme by illegally using a formula from civil law procedure: *"'**I charge you under oath by the living God:** Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.' 'You have said so,' Jesus replied."* This formed the basis for the accusation. This became the alleged evidence to fabricate the basis for a guilty verdict. *"He is worthy of death," they answered. [Matthew 26:62-64, 26:66 New International Version]*

Regardless of what Jesus might have meant by these words, even if he had directly admitted by answering "yes," Judean law prohibited convicting a person based solely on the testimony

of the defendant against himself. The accusation was unlawful because it relied exclusively on the words of the accused without proper evidence or testimony from other witnesses to confirm or refute His statements. Scholars point out the violation of Jeudean law, in particular the illegitimacy of passing a sentence solely on the basis of the defendant's confession. [15] [Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:1, note].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EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

The Sanhedrin had a notable practice in its judicial proceedings, a system resembling adversarial debates. The presiding judge divided the judges into two groups: one to support the prosecution and the other to defend the accused. However, in the trial of Christ, this rule was entirely ignored. All members of the Sanhedrin present supported the high priest Caiaphas [Matthew 26:66], who had already sentenced Jesus before the trial even began. This trial was essentially a

performance to lend an air of legitimacy to the preordained decision for His death.

Judean law stipulated that any death sentence had to be reconfirmed not earlier than the day after it had been pronounced *[Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:1]*.

The Gemara, a section of the Judean Oral law that, together with the Mishnah, forms the Talmud, regards any haste in capital trials as cruelty. In such cases, Judean law was inclined to proceed with great caution. This is why the Judean court was reputed for its preference for mercy and justice. Yet, in the case of Jesus Christ, this procedure was also rejected.

Jesus' accusers, eager for a quick verdict, could not afford to delay proceedings. The trial occurred on the night before Friday, and conducting a trial the following day, Saturday, was prohibited, as the Sabbath is a day of rest. Furthermore, that Saturday was followed by the festival days of Pesach (Passover), one of the most significant Jewish holidays, which again made it impossible to hold the legally required second trial in the near future. For them, any delay increased the risk of failure in this operation to eliminate Christ. Therefore, the court reconvened on the morning of that same Friday.

According to Judean procedural law, the second session had to fully align the first. In this case, however, the judges hastily concluded to deliver Christ to Pilate:

"Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests ***held a consultation*** *with the elders and scribes and the whole council;* ***and they bound Jesus, led Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate.*** *" [Mark 15:1 New King James Version]*

Judean law envisioned that any decision in a criminal case could be reviewed. According to the Talmud, a guilty verdict could be overturned. The Sanhedrin tractate stipulated a 30-day period during which the defense could present new evidence *[Mishnah. Sanhedrin, 3:8]*. However, in the case of Jesus Christ, He was denied the right to defense, and this period was not granted to Him.

From all of the above, we can conclude that a proper and legitimate criminal trial never took place. The members of the Sanhedrin tried Jesus at night, on Friday, on the eve of the Great Feast of the Passover, outside the temple, with an incomplete court, in the absence of an accuser, legal defense counsel, evidence of guilt and charge of the crime, allowing perjured witnesses and violating a number of laws and legal procedures.

Multiple violations of the strict provisions of the law render such a verdict null and void. The perpetrators knew this too, which is why they hurried to conclude the trial before the proponents of fair justice could understand the case and stop the abuses of the high priest and his henchmen. The actions of the accusers were illegal, and the verdict had no legal force. Ultimately, Christ was accused of blasphemy and handed over to Pilate for trial by the Roman court.

A Trial by Law? Pressure on the Investigation and Blackmail of Authorities

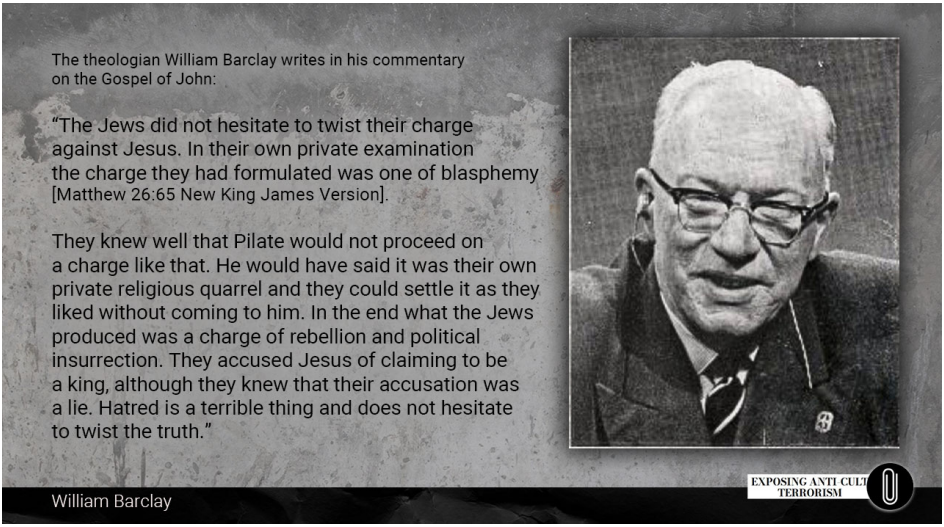
At that time, Judea was under Roman rule, and the Roman emperor had stripped the Sanhedrin of its authority to carry out capital punishment. Any verdict the Sanhedrin delivered lacked direct legal force. Therefore, for anyone to be executed, Judean judges needed a different trial, conducted by the Roman governor. Only the Roman prefect had the authority to rule on matters of life and death. That Friday morning, they appealed to the Roman prefect of Judea, Pontius Pilate. In keeping with the adaptive and deceitful rhetoric typical of anticultism, they leveled a broad range of accusations against Jesus Christ — accusations designed to provoke Pilate's political concerns amid Judea's unstable environment. Yet,

they never mentioned the original charge of blasphemy, which had formed the basis of the Sanhedrin's death sentence just hours earlier.

The theologian William Barclay writes in his commentary on the Gospel of John:

*"The Jews did not hesitate to twist their charge against Jesus. **In their own private examination** the **charge** they had formulated **was one of blasphemy** [Matthew 26:65 New King James Version]. They knew well that Pilate would not proceed on a charge like that. He would have said it was their own private religious quarrel and they could settle it as they liked without coming to him. In the end what **the Jews produced was a charge of rebellion and political insurrection**. They accused Jesus of **claiming to be a king**, although they knew that their accusation was a lie. Hatred is a terrible thing and does not hesitate to twist the truth."*

Barclay, W. (n.d.). John 19. In Daily Study Bible Commentaries. StudyLight.org. Retrieved [Nov.11, 2024]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William Barclay
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

The high priests and other members of the religious elite accused Jesus of rebellion and insurrection before Pilate. However, let's take a closer look at the accusers themselves. The New Testament describes how, following His arrest, Jesus was first brought to Annas — the former high priest, a figure of ambition and authority with a significant grip on power — before being taken to the acting high priest:

"Then ***the detachment of troops and the captain*** *and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him.*

And ***they led Him away to Annas first****, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year.*

Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." [John 18:12-

14 New King James Version]

Although Annas was no longer the high priest that year, he held considerable influence being older than Caiaphas and more experienced in religious leadership. He was a staunch opponent of any innovations that could threaten the pillars of his faith. Annas had close ties with Roman authorities and wielded influence over political decisions. His family belonged to a priestly dynasty, with each of his sons holding the office of high priest at some point. Apparently, Annas was among those who sentenced Christ to death.

Later, **his son**, also named Annas, **became a rebel** himself, stirring up the Great Jewish Revolt (66–74 CE) along with other **insurgents**. As it always happens, because of someone's personal ambition, **over a million lives were lost** on both sides **in this war**, as documented in Josephus Flavius's *The Jewish War*. Annas stood at the forefront of this revolt against Rome, eventually becoming one of the leaders of Judea's provisional government. He was eventually killed during the civil war that he himself had instigated [17].

This brings to mind the words of Jesus Christ: *"But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place,* ***for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.****" [Matthew 26:52 New King James Version]*

In light of the above reference to the Great Jewish Revolt, let's return to the episode about Christ and his dialog with the men of the Pharisees.

"*Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?*" [Matthew 22:16-17 New King James Version]

Seeing their cunning, Jesus wisely responded, *"...Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." [Matthew 22:21 New King James Version]* and the instigators had to leave empty-handed.

Had He had answered "no," such words would have been interpreted as a rebellion against Roman authority. The attempt to trap Jesus into violating Roman law failed. Despite Christ's answer, the accusers raised the issue again during the trial before Pilate, slandering Him:

*"And they began to accuse Him, saying, '**We found** this fellow perverting the nation, and **forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar**, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.'" [Luke 23:2 New King James Version]*

Jesus's words were distorted and presented in court as if he had called for people to refuse paying taxes to Caesar, although in fact he had said the opposite. The fact that the topic of taxes was raised in conversation with Christ was later used by anti-cult forces against him in court. And as always, what the person labeled by anti-cultists actually said was perceived completely irrelevant.

Why did they bring up the topic of taxes? Because it was a highly sensitive, hotly debated, and very painful issue within Judean society, which was under Roman rule. Not all Jews were in favor of paying tribute to Caesar. This sparked debates and unrest, which eventually led to the Jewish revolt, a rebellion that Rome had to suppress with great force. Trying to trap Jesus into an error, his adversaries brought up this emotionally charged issue, one that was painful both to the Jewish people and to Roman authority. This further highlights the anticult method in their actions, that is, employing and manipulating a sensitive issue in a dehumanizing campaign by those involved in anticultism.

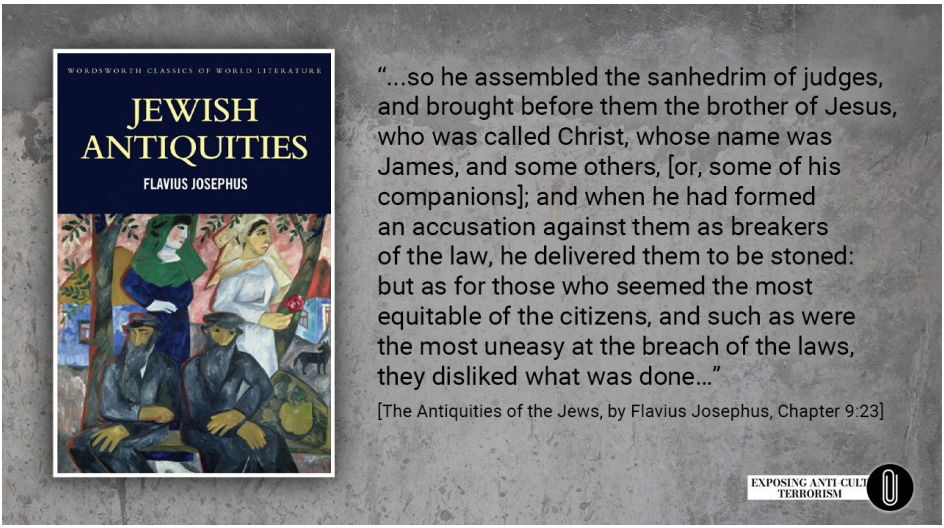
Later, the issue of taxes and the Jews' reluctance to pay tribute to Caesar became a catalyst and one of the primary causes of the Great Jewish Revolt, which escalated into a bloody war. Meanwhile, we do remember that the revolt was led by the son of Jesus Christ's accuser, the High Priest Annas.

Turning to the figure of Annas, another important fact should be mentioned. Over time, religious figures directly involved in the anticult struggles display a thirst for revenge and bloodshed. A striking example of how merciless these persecutors could be in their hatred and vengeance can be traced in yet another tragic story related to the High Priest Annas.

Before the revolt, the situation was such that the current Roman governor Festus had died, and the new governor, Albinus, had not yet arrived in Judea. As soon as Annas (the son of Annas, the high priest who judged Christ) himself took up the office of high priest, he seized the opportunity presented by the absence of a controlling Roman authority and held an illegal trial of James the Just, the brother of Jesus, sentencing him to death. After that, according to some historical sources, James was stoned to death.

Such an act would have been impossible under the restraint of the Roman governor. The Sanhedrin never received approval from the King of Judea, Albinus, for the execution of James. For this horrendous crime, Annas was deposed from his office, and he was condemned by citizens for his unlawful and dishonorable act. [18] *[The Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus].*

"...so he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done..." [The Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Chapter 9:23][13]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EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

In *The Jewish War*, Josephus Flavius described Annas' son, the rebel and murderer of Jesus' brother, as follows:

"...he was a shrewd man in speaking and persuading the people, and ***had already gotten the mastery of those that opposed his designs."***[19]

And in *Antiquities of the Jews*, Flavius called him: *"a bold man in his temper, and very insolent."*[20]

Anticult stigmatizes often accuse others for what they themselves are guilty of. Carefully examining modern proponents of anticult rhetoric and what they accuse people of, one cannot help but wonder: are they themselves guilty of the very offenses they attribute to others? Anticult rhetoric that promotes the ideology of superiority of some over others is a dangerous societal element. Its consequences are shown in history on the example of World War II. But let us return to the story of Pilate's trial.

As Pilate reviewed the charges brought against Jesus by the Judeans, he found no guilt in Him. Jesus made a strong impression on Pilate, and he did not wish to condemn Him to death. First, Pilate tried to avoid handling the case, and when that failed, he offered to release Jesus in honor of the upcoming Passover feast. Yet, the Judeans continued to insist on execution. The priests stirred up the crowd, demanding the release of another prisoner who had already been sentenced to death — Jesus Barabbas — instead of Jesus of Nazareth *[Mark 15:11-15 New International Version]* Ultimately, the Judean elite managed to manipulate the crowd to achieve their goal:

"But the chief priests and the elders ***persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.****" [Matthew 27:20 New International Version]*

Think of the first stage, when an innocent person is dehumanized and stigmatized in front of a crowd to create a negative and hateful image of him for uninformed people, portraying him as a threat that must be eliminated. This image was imposed on people to artificially create public opinion, so that this 'public' sentiment could then influence the judge. After all, it was Christ's accusers who incited the people to shout before Pilate, *'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!'*

Pilate's interrogation of Jesus mainly revolved around the accusation that He allegedly claimed to be the King of the Jews [Mark 15:2, Matthew 27:11, Luke 23:3, John 18:33]. "*Then Pilate.. said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or* ***did others tell you this concerning Me****?'" [John 18:33-34 New King James Version]* This highlights the influence of a third force that attributes words and actions to those who have never said or done so, and who this force has stigmatized and dehumanized.

This is precisely what Christ's accusers did during the trial, pressuring the prefect of Judea, Pilate, with blackmail, threats,

and intimidation. They accused him of treason against the Roman Emperor if he did not submit to their demands:

"From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, 'If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.'" [John 19:12 New King James Version]

This is a recorded evidence of pressure on the authorities based on false evidence of Jesus' guilt. The manipulation over the authorities, *'You are not Caesar's friend,'* carried a pointed implication: if Pilate were to release Jesus, he would appear a traitor to the Emperor, since he would be freeing someone allegedly posing a threat to Roman rule.

Recall that Jesus was accused of supposedly declaring Himself King of the Jews. *"Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar",* they shouted *[John 19:12 New King James Version].* Under Roman law, no one could call himself a king, as that would be taken as open rebellion against Roman authority. Such a self-proclamation could lead to civil war, as Judea already had a ruler appointed by Rome, and only Rome decided who should govern there.

If Pilate protected such a 'violator,' he would himself be seen as a traitor to Rome. The religious elite blackmailed Pilate with

charges of treason, a crime carrying severe punishment. This was also a threat from the accusers: if Pilate did not comply, he risked losing his position and the support of the Emperor's favor, upon which he relied. This was direct pressure on a representative of Roman power, on the investigation, and on the judicial process by religiously biased accusers.

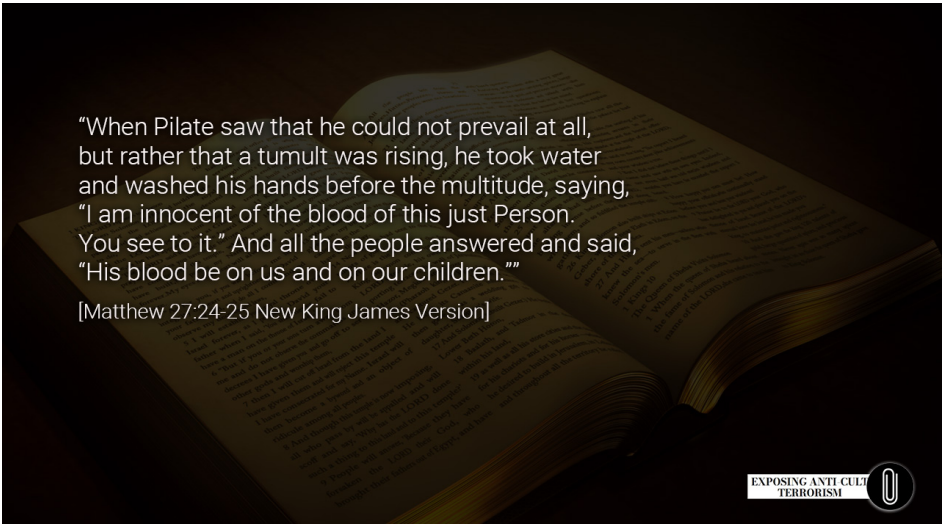
"Anyone who makes himself a king" are distorted words by the anticult representatives, who were framing Jesus as a criminal under Roman law. In reality, Jesus never claimed Himself to be the king of the Jews.

The Jewish people, at that time, were waiting for the Messiah promised in their Scriptures [Matthew 21:9] and witnessing the miracles performed by Jesus, were asking among themselves whether He was the Son of David—whether He was from royal lineage — since He performed such miracles, healed people, and displayed great wisdom [Matthew 12:23]. Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God as being in another, immaterial world, and therefore, He made no claims to earthly power. Yet, these rumors were twisted by anticult henchmen, who used it against Jesus. They slandered Him at His trial presenting these rumors as supposed proof of His guilt — betrayal of Caesar, by allegedly declaring Himself the King of the Jews.

The issue was not the substance of the charge, but the ensuing punishment for violating that law. In this case, it was the most extreme form of punishment – execution, which the representatives of that power were aiming for. If the execution had been assigned for another crime, they would have put forward a different accusation.

The Judean authorities pressured Pilate with blackmail and cornered him:

"When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, ***he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person****. You see to it.' And all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.'" [Matthew 27:24-25 New King James Version]*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EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Pilate's inner circle did not want Jesus to die. His wife, sensing injustice, urged him to pardon Jesus: *"While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.'" [Matthew 27:19 New King James Version]*

Pilate himself did not want to execute an innocent man, "For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy." *[Matthew 27:18 New King James Version]*. The law was on Jesus's side and rightfully protected Him. Yet, one force, one of hatred, provocation, and destruction remained that wanted Jesus dead — the anticult force.

Conclusion

Jesus was innocent; he broke no law punishable by death. Furthermore, He was loved and respected by the people. Yet, a small group of outwardly religious individuals, engaged in anticult activities, presumed to decide for the people, for society at large, and even for future generations — up until today — whether to execute Jesus or pardon Him, whether to destroy His teachings or allow them to spread in the world.

The stigmatizers and accusers, driven by their extreme hatred for Christ, repeatedly violated the Law and completely forgot

about mercy and justice, including those commanded in their Talmud.

Today, we see the same tactics, only on a larger scale. Nowadays, countless innocent people, persecuted and dehumanized by anticult representatives, number in the millions. These are people from different nations. Millions endure what Christ went through two thousand years ago and what the first Christians suffered.

Anticult agents, just like in the past, continue to manipulate the masses and still manage to incite the crowd to shout, “Crucify! Crucify!” They coerce the judiciary into becoming their puppets, delivering the verdicts they need. If people and the law do not stop this anticult machine of repression and destruction today, sooner or later, it will reach everyone.

After all, for the representatives of anticultism, it does not matter whether a person lived by the law or broke it, whether he or she was an example of ethical life or a hardened sinner. Anticultists couldn’t care less about the actual facts, about the existence of some activity (be it legal, illegal or even completely absent), about anything from the lives of their targets. Nothing matters much to them. They have one goal: destruction, and they have the methods to achieve that goal.

Today, we live in a world that has lost Christ because of the actions of anticult representatives. Are we satisfied with a world where anticultism, operating from the shadows, decides who should live and who should die? Are we satisfied with a world that for two thousand years has been expelling Christ, crucifying His teachings? What kind of world could it have been if society had not fallen for anticult manipulation and had made a different choice in favor of Jesus of Nazareth, not the criminal Barabbas?

What kind of world have we lost?

Source:

1. https://www.biblegateway.com/
2. https://www.halakhah.com/pdf/nezikin/Sanhedrin.pdf
3. https://ia802302.us.archive.org/17/items/a-discourse-against-christians-celsus/A%20Discourse%20Against%20Christians%20%28Celsus
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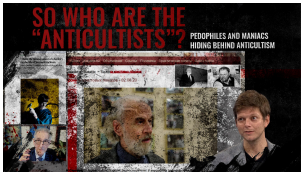

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